

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 HA-05 IO-13 EUR-12 SSM-03 CIAE-00
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FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9991
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRU
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L JERUSALEM 0080

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT IS JO
SUBJ: VIEWS OF SOUTHERN WEST BANK MAYORS

SUMMARY: CONGEN OFFICERS HAVE HAD OCCASION TO SEE THREE
MAYORS OF SOUTHERN WEST BANK TOWNS OVER PAST SEVERAL
DAYS--BETHLEHEM'S FREIJ, HEBRON'S QAWASIMA, AND HALHUL'S
MULHIM. ALL ARE DEEPLY DISCOURAGED BY ISRAELI RESPONSE
TO SADAT ON PALESTINIAN ISSUES. THEY STATE THAT IT WOULD
BE IMPOSSIBLE FOR THEM TO PARTICIPATE IN JERUSALEM
TALKS AT THIS POINT AS BEGIN PLAN FOR AUTONOMY WHICH
THEY SEE AS CONTINUATION OF OCCUPATION IS NON-
STARTER. THEY IGNORE OR DISMISS COMPLETELY SELF-STYLED
MODERATES SUCH AS JA'ABARI, SHIYOUKHI, AND DUDIN. END SUMMARY.

1. MAYOR FREIJ OF BETHLEHEM ON JANUARY 10 TOLD
CONGEN OFFICER THAT HE HAS "NEVER BEEN MORE DEPRESSED."
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HE OUTLINED TO CONGEN OFFICER HIS REACTION TO SUPCOMING
POLITICAL COMMITTEE MEETINGS IN JERUSALEM AND SOME OTHER
DEVELOPMENTS ON THE WEST BANK: (A) POLITICAL COMMITTEE
MEETINGS: FREIJ CERTAIN THEY BODED, AT BEST, ONLY BILATERAL
EGYPTIAN-ISRAELI AGREEMENT AND, AT WORST, DECISION
IMPOSING ISRAELI-STYLED SELF-RULE ON THE WEST BANK AND
GAZA STRIP. MAYOR HAD "NO INTENTION" OF TAKING PART IN

MEETINGS. HE FEARED A SWING TO LEFT AMONG MODERATES OF THE WEST BANK AS RESULT OF MEETINGS. (B) WEST BANK EXTREME RIGHT/ IDENTIFYING BURHAN JA'ABARI, HUSSEIN SHIYOUKHI, AND MUSTAFA DUDIN AS "MODERATES" WHOM PRESS REPORTS TO HAVE RECENTLY REQUESTED TO MEET EGYPTIAN FOMIN KAMEL, FREIJ DECRIED THE GROUP AS PEOPLE "WITH WHOM NO RESPECTABLE WEST BANKER COULD ASSOCIATE." HE WAS PUSHED TO THE LEFT, HE EXPLAINED, BY SUCH SO-CALLED MODERATES: "MODERATES ON THE WEST BANK WILL DISSAPPEAR," HE XPLAINED: "IF THEY (JA'ABARI, ET AL) CALL THEMSELVES MODERATES, HOW COULD I BE ONE?" (QAWASIMA AND MULHIM WOULD NOT EVEN SERIOUSLY DISCUSS SUCH "MODERATES.") (C) POSITION OF MAYORS: ACCORDING TO FREIJ, WEST BANK MAYORS AE WITHHOLDING PUBLIC COMMENT ON PEACE PROPOSALS TO GIVE PROPOSALS CAHNCE BEAR FRUIT. IF EXPECTED JOINT STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES FAILS INCLUDE TWO CRUCIAL POINTS--RECOGNITION OF PALESTIANIAN RIGHTS TO HOMELAND AND TO SELF-DETERMINATION--THEN FREIJ THROUGH MAYORS ISSUE STRONG STATEMENT CONDEMNING PEACE EFFORTS (AND PROBABLY CONDEMNING "COLLABORATORS" SUCH AS JA'ABARI). MULHIM HINTED THAT A PUBLIC STATEMENT WAS IN PREPARATION BUT DID NOT REVEAL ANYTHING ABOUT ITS CONTENTS OR TIME OF RELEASE. (D) WEST BANK SETTLEMENT: ALTHOUGH DECLARING HE WOULD "FIGHT BITTERLY" BEGIN'S PLAN FOR SELF-RULE, FREIJ STOPPED SHORT OF CALLING FOR PALESTINIAN STATE. "WE CANNOT GOVERN

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OURSELVES," HE OBSERVED. FREIJ FORESAW A WEST BANK "CANTON" RETAINING CLOSE ECONOMIC TIES WITH ISRAEL, BUT WITH INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL SECURITY PROVIDED BY JORDAN.

2. PLO: WHILE FREIJ HAD NO COMMENTS ON PLO, BOTH KAWASIMA AND MULHIM CONTINUE TO SEE IT AS ONLY REPRESENTATIVE OF PALESTIANIAN PEOPLE. WHILE NOT OPTIMISTIC THAT JERUSALEM TALKS WOULD LEAD TO ACCEPTABLE STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES (FULL ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL AND RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION), MULHIM THOUGHT THAT IF SUCH STATEMENT WAS SOMEHOW OBTAINED, SOME WEST BANKERS AS WELL AS PALESTIANIANS IN JORDAN COULD BE DEPUTIZED BY PLO TO SPEAK FOR PALESTINIANS IN JERUSALEM TALKS. QAWASIMA WAS VERY BLUNT IN HIS COMMENT THAT PLO WAS SERIOUD IN ITS WARNINGS TO THOSE WEST BANKERS WHO ATTEMPT TO PUT THEMSELVES FORWARD AS REPRESENTATIVES OF PALESTINIANS.

3. GUARANTOR OF WEST BANK SECURITY: MULHIM SAID THAT HE HOPED U.S. WAS SERIOUSLY CONSIDERING OFFERING TO HAVE U.S. FORCES ACT AS WEST BANK GUARANTOR.

HE ASSUMED THAT ISRAEL WOULD NOT ACCEPT UN FORCES
AND WOULD ONLY BE WILLING TO TRUST U.S.
GUARANTEE IN RETURN FOR ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL.

4. COMMENT: ALL MAYORS ARE DISPIRITED OR THEY
DOUBT THAT SADAT INITIATIVE WILL RESULT IN PROGRESS
ON PALESTINIAN ISSUES. THEIR CRITICISM,
IN CONVERSATIONS WITH US, FOCUSED ON ISRAELIS, NOT ON
EGYPTIANS OR U.S. FREIJ CONCLUDED HIS COMMENTS BY
SAYING THAT IF THINGS TO NOT IMPROVE HE WAS SERIOUSLY
CONSIDERING MOVING TO U.S. AND LIVING "WHERE YOU
DON'T HAVE THESE PROBLEMS."
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